

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-04 EA-06 FRB-01 INR-05

IO-04 NEA-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00

CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 SWF-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-03

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FM USMISSION OECD PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH DC IMMEDIATE 4133

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OECD PARIS 25911

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, OECD

SUBJECT: IEP GREEK VIEWS ON COUNCIL MEETING

REF: SHINN-TARRANT TELECON

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER ATHANASSOPOULAS, ACTING ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE AND WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR TURNER OCTOBER 31 TO DISCUSS DIFFICULTIES GREEK GOVERNMENT IS HAVING IN REACHING A DECISION ON IEP. ATHANASSOPOULAS PRESSED FOR DELAY IN COUNCIL MEETING IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR NEW GREEK GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW IEP BEFORE OECD DECISION TAKEN. AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT MAINTAINING PRESENTLY AGREED SCHEDULE IS ESSENTIAL, REPEATING TALKING POINTS PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT (REF TELECON). END SUMMARY.

2. ATHANASSOPOULAS SAID MINISTRIES IN ATHENS DID NOT
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RECEIVE IEP DOCUMENTS (I.E. AGREEMENT AND DRAFT COUNCIL

DECISION) UNTIL OCTOBER 29 (SIC) AND THAT, IN VIEW OF UPCOMING GREEK ELECTIONS ON NOVEMBER 17, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A DECISION IN TIME FOR COUNCIL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 15. IN FACT, BECAUSE OF PRESENT CONFUSION IN ATHENS, HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GET ANY INSTRUCTIONS AT ALL. HE SAID THAT, FOR THE MOMENT, THIS LEFT HIM WITH TWO OPTIONS: EITHER HE COULD PLAN ON ABSTAINING AT THE COUNCIL MEETING, OR HE COULD TRY TO GET THE COUNCIL MEETING POSTPONED.

3. ATHANASSOPOULAS SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, IT WOULD BE VERY EMBARRASSING IF HE HAD TO ABSTAIN ON AN ISSUE OF SUCH IMPORTANCE FOR OECD. HE SAID THAT A FRENCH ABSTENTION WOULD BE QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE, BECAUSE EVERYONE WOULD KNOW THE POLITICAL REASONING BEHIND SUCH A DECISION, BUT IN THE CASE OF GREECE, EVERYONE WOULD KNOW THAT HE WAS ABSTAINING BECAUSE HIS GOVERNMENT WAS UNABLE TO ACT. ATHANASSOPOULAS SAID THIS WOULD BE "HUMILIATING" AND THAT IT WAS THE FAULT OF THE ECO COUNTRIES THAT GREECE WAS PLACED IN SUCH A POSITION. HE SAID THAT IF THE DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO HIS GOVERNMENT IN TIMELY FASHION, AND IF THERE HAD BEEN DISCUSSION WITH ALL OECD MEMBERS CONCERNING THE DATE FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING, THEN THIS PROBLEM COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

4. ATHANASSOPOULAS WANTED TO KNOW WHY IT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 15 AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE DATE FOR THE MEETING COULD BE POSTPONED, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE NEW GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEFLY REVIEW THE PROGRAM. HE ALSO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER GREECE MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO VOTE "YES," BUT ON AN AD REFERENDUM BASIS.

5. AMBASSADOR TURNER SAID HE WAS PUZZLED CONCERNING ATHANASSOPOULAS' STATEMENT THAT GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD NOT RECEIVED IEP DOCUMENTS UNTIL OCTOBER 29. HE SAID IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT DUTCH GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN THE DOCUMENTS TO GREEK AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS

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ABOUT OCTOBER 10. IT WAS ALSO HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT MANY OF OTHER NON-IEP COUNTRIES RECEIVED THE TEXTS AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME. HOWEVER, HE WANTED TO ASSURE ATHANASSOPOULAS THAT, WHATEVER THE PRECISE DATE MAY HAVE BEEN, IT CERTAINLY HAD NOT BEEN THE INTENT OF THE GROUP TO PLACE THE GREEK GOVERNMENT, OR ANY OTHER NON-IEP MEMBER, IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AS FAR AS TIMING WAS CONCERNED.

6. AMBASSADOR TURNER SAID HE SINCERELY REGRETTED IF THIS HAD, IN FACT, HAPPENED AND HE UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM THE GREEK GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE HAVING IN MAKING A DECISION ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD IN ATHENS. THE U.S. BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE COMPELLING REASONS TO FOLLOW THROUGH NOW WITH THE SCENARIO AGREED TO BY THE OTHER OECD COUNTRIES. THE DATE FOR THE PROVISIONAL COMING INTO EFFECT OF THE AGREEMENT WAS ARRIVED AT AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITHIN THE GROUP, AND IS INCORPORATED IN ARTICLE 68 OF THE

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AGREEMENT. LIKE ALL COMPROMISES, IT WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE DATE PREFERRED BY ALL MEMBERS. THUS' THERE IS A VERY REAL PROBABILITY THAT THE ENTIRE PROGRAM COULD

BEGIN TO UNRAVEL IF THE SCHEDULE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION WERE NOW TO SLIP. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CASE OF THE JAPANESE, WHO ARE AFRAID THAT IF THE AGREEMENT DOES NOT COME INTO PROVISIONAL APPLICATION AS SCHEDULED, THERE WOULD BE A NECESSITY TO RENEGOTIATE ARTICLE 68, AND PERHAPS OTHER ASPECTS OF THE DOCUMENT AS WELL, AND THAT THIS COULD CREATE REAL DIFFICULTIES.

7. AMBASSADOR TURNER STRESSED THAT SOLIDARITY SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US, AS OECD MEMBERS, AS WELL AS MAJOR CONSUMERS. THE U.S., THEREFORE, STRONGLY HOPES THAT GREECE WILL DECIDE IT IS READY TO ASSUME THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE PROGRAM AND WILL APPLY TO JOIN THE

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IEP. IN THIS REGARD, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT IF IT CANNOT REACH A DECISION TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP AT THIS TIME, IT WOULD LOSE NOTHING BY COMING INTO THE PROGRAM LATER ON. AMBASSADOR TURNER STRESSED THAT THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE IEP, WHETHER A COUNTRY JOINS AS A CHARTER MEMBER OR ADHERES LATER ON. SIMILARLY, THE ASSESSMENT BY THE GROUP OF AN APPLICANT'S ABILITY TO MEET THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE PROGRAM WOULD BE MADE ON PRECISELY THE SAME BASIS LATER ON AS IT WOULD BE NOW. HE WANTED TO BE VERY CLEAR ON THIS POINT.

8. AMBASSADOR TURNER STRESSED THAT THE PROGRAM PROVIDES ALL OF US WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROTECTION AND REDUCES THE PROBABILITY THAT THE MAJOR CONSUMING NATIONS MIGHT HAVE TO CONFRONT ANOTHER OIL-SUPPLY EMERGENCY THIS WINTER. THIS CLEARLY IS IN THE INTEREST OF GREECE, WHETHER IT IS IN OR OUT OF THE PROGRAM IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. AMBASSADOR TURNER SAID HE WAS SURE THAT GREECE DID NOT WISH TO DELAY MOVING AHEAD NOW ON THIS IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL EFFORT, AND HE URGED GREECE TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE IEP WHEN IT COMES BEFORE THE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 15. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT ATHANASSOPOULAS UNDERSTOOD THAT A POSITIVE VOTE ON THE COUNCIL DECISION DID NOT COMMIT GREECE TO APPLYING FOR THE IEP ITSELF. AMBASSADOR TURNER SAID THAT IF A POSITIVE VOTE WERE IMPOSSIBLE, THEN AN ABSTENTION WOULD BE A PERFECTLY JUSTIFIABLE POSITION FOR THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO TAKE, AND HE DID NOT FEEL SUCH A POSITION WOULD IN ANY WAY REFLECT ADVERSELY ON GREECE OR BE A "HUMILIATION" AS ATHANASSOPOULAS HAD INDICATED. AN AD REFERENDUM VOTE, HOWEVER, WOULD BE OUT OF THE QUESTION SINCE IT WOULD MEAN THAT THE VOTE COULD BE REVERSED LATER OR.

9. ATHANASSOPOULAS THANKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR HIS

DESCRIPTION OF THE U.S. POSITION AND SAID, IN HIS VIEW, IT WAS "IMPOSSIBLE" THAT GREECE WOULD OPPOSE THE CREATION OF THE NEW ENERGY AGENCY AT THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL DECISION. (NOTE: WHEN PRESSED, HE SAID "EVEN IF IT TOOK PLACE ON NOVEMBER 15.") HE SAID HE WOULD BE TAKING A MORE POSITIVE LINE IN HIS COMMUNICATIONS WITH
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ATHENS THAN HE HAD TAKEN WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS CALL HAD BEEN TO GET A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE U.S. POSITION ON THIS ISSUE.

10. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL WHETHER ATHANASSOPOULAS' EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ABOUT THE "HUMILIATING" NATURE OF AN ABSTENTION IS THE REAL GREEK REASON FOR DESIRING A DELAY IN THE COUNCIL MEETING. ALTHOUGH ATHANASSOPOULAS DID NOT RAISE THE ISSUE, WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHERS (E.G. THE DUTCH AND LANTZKE) THAT THE GREEKS MAY DESIRE TO JOIN THE IEP BUT ARE AFRAID THEY CANNOT EVEN COME CLOSE TO MEETING THE STOCKPILE OBLIGATIONS, AND THAT THEIR APPLICATION, THEREFORE, WOULD BE REJECTED. THEY REPORTEDLY BELIEVE THIS IS WHY THEY WERE NOT INVITED TO THE OCTOBER 22 "HOPEFULS" MEETING IN BRUSSELS. THEY ALSO ARE REPORTED TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR BARGAINING LEVERAGE TO GET THE GROUP TO LOWER ITS ENTRANCE STANDARDS WILL BE GREATER BEFORE THE COUNCIL DECISION THAN AFTER, AND THAT THIS IS THE REAL REASON FOR THEIR RECENT MANEUVERING CONCERNING THE DATE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING.
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